

In recent years, State leaders passed an education funding plan and a teacher pay raise that Mississippi could not afford. It was, however, politically popular and made everyone feel good for a while. Now that the bills have come due in 2004, Mississippi is faced with a \$700 million budget shortfall.

Since public education makes up more than 65% of Mississippi's total budget, it is impossible for education to remain unscathed without absolutely decimating every other function of state government. It would be like trying to find savings in your household budget without touching food, house payments or car payments – it can't be done.

Unfortunately, there are some State leaders who do not want to face Mississippi's budget problems. They just want to write another bad check to education this year and call it "fully funding education." That is how Mississippi got into this budget crisis in the first place.